



The Kennedy Center

OPENING STAGES

A Quarterly Newsletter for People with Disabilities Pursuing Careers in the
Performing Arts

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FROM THE EDITOR: THE CRUELEST MONTH

T. S. Eliot wrote that "April is the cruelest month." But I disagree. I think the cruelest month is November. At least it is here in the Northeast where I live.

By November the trees have lost the brilliant colors they display in October. Their leaves have mostly all fallen, and their branches are bare. We've changed from daylight savings time to standard time, so darkness comes much earlier. And the weather has started to get cold, a foreboding of the four months of inhospitable winter ahead.

In November I feel the oppression of time passing. This is partly because it is the month of my birthday. And partly it is because I am already anticipating the end of the year and the start of the next. The prospect of the winter holidays doesn't help much either. Maybe I'm a curmudgeon, but I'm more likely to feel alienated than cheered by the rampant commercialism and obligatory jollity of the season. Call it seasonal affective disorder if you want, but November tends to depress me.

So, in November I badly need things to cheer me up. I need a creative project to excite me. I need fulfillment -- a publication, a production. And I suspect that many of you have similar needs. Our moods are vulnerable to the fickle gaze of the muse and the even more unpredictable whims of the public.

Fortunately this year I have a production of a play of mine to look forward to in January. It's a short play at a small theater. But it's something! It's that little adrenaline boost of "another opening, another show," as Cole Porter would say. And I treasure it.

So, my holiday wish to all of you is that you work well and have deserved successes to fan the flames of your creativity and keep your spirits warm through the winter and all year long.

Paul Kahn

BUILDING A CAREER IN THE ARTS

by Lisa Thorson

This article was adapted from Ms. Thorson's keynote address at "Putting Creativity to Work," a statewide conference produced in 2004 by VSA Arts of Massachusetts in collaboration with the Massachusetts Cultural Council, the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission and the National Endowment for the Arts.

I am an artist who is also a wheelchair user. Am I success? The answer depends how you define success. I define it this way: I am making a living from what I am most talented at doing and what I love most -- music.

Since my injury I've gone down many paths, trying to discover where I could work, what skills were really valuable, what talents I really possessed and what a life as an artist really entails over the long term. I've heard every kind of NO you can imagine: no access to the stage, club promoters questioning whether I was "really going to sing in the wheelchair," "sorry the bathroom isn't accessible," "your voice isn't what we are looking for," "you are not well known enough," and on and on and on.

Why did I tolerate so much discouragement? Because I couldn't see my life moving forward without art in it. There are more Lisa Thorson memorial ramps, curb cuts and access routes than I can count, because for some crazy reason I wouldn't and to this day cannot take no for an answer.

If you are an artist with a disability and you feel you must pursue your art and are sure of your talent, dream big but be practical. You must have passion, vision, tenacity and a realistic perspective to be a working artist.

Forging a life in the arts is tough for anyone in our society. But in one way artists with disabilities are more prepared to deal with the struggle than artists without disabilities. Why? Because we are used to the word NO. We are used to forging a new path every day when the ramp is blocked, when there is no interpreter, no raised signage, no benefits, no housing, no transportation or just an ignorant attitude that says stay away. We already have the strength to fight back, to advocate and to find a different path. We improvise every day. Turning obstacles into assets is a way of life for people with disabilities. And that's what you need to succeed as an artist.

From my perspective as a working performer for 30 years there are some very important steps you must take before moving forward in your career.

Assess your talent.

Take a good, long, realistic, honest look in the mirror. Then get a professional evaluation that you can trust. Your talent might be undeveloped, but is the glimmer, the shimmer and the creativity there? We have 700 singers in the Berklee College of Music Voice Department where I teach. I judge hundreds of them in classes, exams, auditions and scholarships every semester. Can I spot talent? Yes! Can I spot success? No! Can I predict who will work hard at their careers? Yes! From the rock singer to the classical artist, I can see and hear the singers who have passion, talent and a head for business. Sometimes I see the most naturally gifted fail, because they do not have one of these three qualities.

The Game Plan

To move forward in your career you must have a Game Plan with goals. Your plan should define your vision, what you eventually want to do and the objectives you need to get there. To make your vision a reality it is essential that your game plan have 1) a craft building component and 2) a promotion component.

Craft

You must improve your skills to be competitive. Think about the best place for you to learn. It could be a college, a professional school or from an individual. Find the place that matches your learning style, not the most prestigious. I learned from private teachers, adult education classes, books, conferences and at conservatories.

Can technology assist you? Technology is great, but it is expensive and should be practical. The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission assisted me with my graduate studies by helping me purchase a keyboard I could use with my computer to write music. That tool gave me an opportunity to practice, do assignments, compose and arrange in a way I had never done before. It made me a better musician.

Making a Living

While you are developing your career you must figure out how you will pay the rent. What is your budget? How will the money you earn affect your benefits? Can you retain them? If not, what are the alternatives?

Thinking creatively about making a living is essential. How many different ways can you use your art to make money? I sang in countless hotel lounges, jazz brunches, special events and concerts. I taught and still do. I did arts access work that contained a teaching component. That work gave me an opportunity to learn how to write grants and scholarships, raise money, market my goods and services and watch how presenting organizations ran their artistic and business operations

Get into the Environment.

While you are honing your craft, get yourself into the artistic environment you eventually want to work in. Answer phones for a music organization or theatre, assist a director or designer or curator, write a newsletter, design flyers or websites, volunteer for a gallery, teach at a school. Let your day gig subsidize your art, but let it also have relevance. Let it inform your craft, or the business side of what you do, or both.

Find Advocates.

Seek out people who can help you. Assistance is critical but take responsibility for your own career. Advocates are partners. A counselor, mentor or educator is a facilitator not someone to blame it on or to do the work for you.

I've had many wonderful advocates and fans. Yet, with all of that support, there still have been many tough and discouraging times. In the mid 80's I was trying to forge a career as an actress in Boston, when I hit a low. I finally knew that making a living in Boston as an actress with a disability was not realistic. I was at a crossroads. Would I

just quit? After another long look in the mirror, I realized that my voice was my greatest asset. It always had been, and the theatre had been a diversion. In my heart I knew it was time to really focus on music. With that realization I had to make a plan.

So, at age 33 I went back to school. The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission helped support my graduate studies at New England Conservatory. I had to face my musical shortcomings. In order to be an accomplished musician, I needed to improve my skills, so that I could confidently write, lead and teach. School changed my life. More mentors assisted in the journey. And I was helped by my incredibly supportive family, friends, and Gene, my life partner, who never thought I was crazy.

Today I am still planning, dreaming, looking for advocates and assessing my strengths and weaknesses in my art and in my business. From my long experience, here are the most important things for you to remember about building your career.

You must be organized. You cannot say "I'm so immersed in my art I can't return a phone call." Playing diva or prima donna doesn't cut it. Ask for assistance to get the job done. Be specific about the tasks you want help with. Be proactive in promotion. Advertise anything you do, and get people to come see it. Meet people in your artistic discipline, get them to write about you and your work, get reviews, earn respect and generate interest!

Find mentors you can trust. They should be knowledgeable, honest and forthright people who will say, "It didn't really work this time" or "Yes, that was great! Pursue it!" Think about the exploitation of your disability. Is your disability a part of your art and your image? How far do you want to use it as a story for promotion? Does your disability experience inform your art?

Take care of your health. No matter your discipline, a healthy body and mind are essential to productivity.

Say YES to every opportunity to practice your craft and strut your stuff. Not every gig will be great, but great things are always possible.

Finally, be ready for curves -- for unexpected obstacles and opportunities. Tenacity will help you over the obstacles. The talent you have crafted will help you exploit and enjoy the opportunities.

The passion you have for creating and sharing art should nurture your soul, give you pride and give you purpose. Don't forget that we artists have the power to change lives. Whether through laughter, tears, political commentary, or beauty, your individual contribution makes the world a better place.

PEOPLE

Marianne Galloway

Director And Founding Member Of Risk Theater Initiative

Interviewed by Kari Lynn Pope

Kari Lynn Pope interviewed Marianne Galloway while she was working as observing director on *Open Window* by Stephen Sachs, a collaborative production of Pasadena Playhouse and Deaf West Theater. The play tells the story of a Deaf young man who spent his childhood in isolation and his formative years chained in a basement by his abusive father.

“The issue I related to the most isn’t actually a Deaf issue, but it’s a human issue, and that is how to communicate.”

Kari: To start with, I feel like there is a common point between us. We both have fairly invisible disabilities.

Marianne: With hearing impairments, no one knows until they start talking to you, and with you no one knows until you start to move. I grew up in a family where I wasn’t really told that I had a disability. It wasn’t until I got out into a school setting, and at that, an older school setting, that people started telling me I had a disability. In my family, no matter how you were or whatever was going on with you, you were told that there was nothing that you couldn’t do.

Kari: How do you relate to the Deaf issues in “Open Window”?

Marianne: Well, I think that the issue I related to the most isn’t actually a Deaf issue, but it’s a human issue, and that is how to communicate. Words can be so paltry in trying to express what we think, and every person struggles with that on a day-to-day basis, whether they have a hearing impairment, or whether they have aphasia, or just talking to one another on a day-to-day basis. The script confronted those communication issues directly in a beautiful way.

Kari: Do you use ASL at all?

Marianne: Very little. My hearing impairment is that I hear vowels exclusively; I don’t hear consonants. I lip-read. I didn’t grow up in a Deaf community. I didn’t grow up with parents who went to any great lengths to teach me sign language--unfortunately--so I’ve been coming to it later in life.

Kari: I have a friend who is profoundly nearsighted. She said that when she was growing up she assumed that all people see the way she does. Did you think that about the way you hear?

Marianne: Absolutely, in fact I went to Manhattan School of Music for high school as a vocal performance major. I was going to be an opera singer! I didn’t know until I got much older, when I was reading more poetic material and I would read descriptions of the way wind went through trees, that I would think, “Wow, it doesn’t sound like that to me at all. I seem to be missing out on a lot.”

Kari: I would think with singing you'd be at a distinct advantage, having to hear and shape the vowel sounds to enunciate songs.

Marianne: You absolutely are. But try to convince the opera world of that! That's another story altogether. Ultimately you sing what you feel, not what you hear. You develop your technique--at least I did--based on feeling, because you're never going to be able to hear what your own voice sounds like anyway.

"When you're young, starting out on any endeavor, it's important to have that person who has walked 8,000 miles to say, 'It's going to be hard, but you've got to kind of just walk through that fire.'"

Kari: How did you make the transition from opera to theater?

Marianne: It was kind of an easy one. I ended up going to the New World School of the Arts in Miami, an arts conservatory affiliated with the University of Florida. I had an internship with Florida Grand Opera, which sounds a lot more glamorous than it actually was! It was mostly going to pick up the opera singers that they had hired at the airport and bringing them to their apartments and getting them set up. I started to realize from meeting all these people who were traveling from all over the world and were there for two weeks, before flying off to some other country, that was not a lifestyle that I was interested in maintaining. I shifted my major to English with a concentration in theater. But I had actually decided at that point that I was going to be a lawyer and just do entertainment law.

I transferred up to Gainesville, and I had a professor there named Sidney Homan, who was in the English department and who ran a theater company in Gainesville, the Acrosstown Repertory Theater. He was just one of the most energetic and inspiring people that I've ever met. He kind of took me under his wing. His classes were very active; you didn't just sit and read a play and talk about it. Plays are written to be performed, so, no matter who was in the class, no matter what their performance experience was, we were assigned scenes and we walked through the play, live, together. It was just so dynamic.

I was in the Honors program, and I decided that, because of all my musical background, my thesis was going to be producing and directing a production of Stephen Sondheim's "Into the Woods". Sidney let me do it! There was no logic behind it. I had no directing training. I had absolutely no business doing it. There was a little company in town called The Rapsallions at the Periphery. I convinced them to let me produce it with them, and that was my directing debut. It was figuring it out as I went along and realizing that I had some knack for directing.

Kari: It sounds like you've had a very encouraging time with your career so far.

Marianne: I've been very, very lucky. I walked into my first directing gig without experience, but I had a mentor walking by my side through the whole thing. When you're young, starting out on any endeavor, it's important to have that person who has

walked 8,000 miles to say, “It’s going to be hard, but you’ve got to kind of just walk through that fire.”

I’ve had a series of mentors since Sidney Homan who have been incredibly influential. I had Raphael Parry from the Dallas Shakespeare Festival; he took me under his wing after I got to Dallas. Eric Simonson, the director on “Open Window”, has been incredibly supportive.

Kari: What do you consider the moment when you really broke in professionally?

Marianne: The professional breakthrough was when we debuted Risk Theater Initiative with a production of “Waiting for Godot”. It opened in a little barn in the middle of a little suburb of Dallas called Flower Mound. It was just a two-week run; we were just out there to develop as artists. We were developing a company, but we knew we were young and had limited resources. What happened was that the head theater critic for the Dallas Morning News caught wind of it. No one had done “Godot” in Dallas in several years, and he loved “Godot”; he had directed it when he was in college. He came out to see what we were doing in a barn. He wrote the most glowing review that Dallas had seen for the production, and people just came flocking out to see it. It became the little “Godot” that could! Because of that production, people started writing feature articles about the company and about me in the Dallas Morning News and several other publications. And that started to raise awareness about who we were as a company and who I was as a director. And that spread out to many important organizations, including the company that got me involved in “Open Window”.

The development of Risk Theater Initiative and the work that I’ve been doing with the company has opened doors for me. I was invited to the Lincoln Center Theater Directors’ Lab and Directors’ Lab West, and that opened some other doors. But it all started with the work that was being done with Risk.

Kari: Disclosure of a disability can be a difficult issue for performers and people in the arts, particularly. When you said that you were getting all this exposure and stories in the press, did anybody know about your disability then or did you seek an opportunity to talk about it?

Marianne: I know in the first interview that I had with Dallas Morning News, I did specify that I have a hearing impairment. Lawson Tate did the interview, and he said, “Well, that’s interesting, especially with the opera background,” but it was not made a big deal about in the interview. The article was focused on my achievements as a young woman, and in passing there was a sentence about my hearing impairment.

I don’t have a label as a Deaf director. I don’t have a label as a disabled artist. I just have a label as an artist. That’s just been the way it’s developed. I’ve never hidden the fact that I have hearing impairments, because it’s impossible to. I mishear things all the time, and I’m pretty candid about it. And I’m pretty candid about the way I need to communicate, especially face-to-face. If someone’s talking away from me, or if someone’s talking on my left side, or if someone’s talking behind me, I’m lost!

“This is kind of the middle ground that the hearing-impaired... find themselves in-- if you don't speak sign language, you are shut out from the deaf world. But you can't hear, so you're shut out from the hearing world.”

Kari: What kinds of accommodations do you need, and how do you make sure that you get them, when you're doing your job as a director?

Marianne: You don't always get them, unfortunately, even with the Americans with Disabilities Act and everything! For the most part in Dallas I work with the same group of people, when I'm lucky, and I've got a team of designers and a team of associates for whom dealing with my hearing impairment is just part of their natural rhythm now because we've been working together for so long. If they're starting to walk away from me and they remember something they have to tell me, they'll turn around and make sure that they're in front of me. When I work with new artists, usually people are very sensitive, and there just aren't a whole lot of people who don't take the disability into account. I'm pretty clear with them about it and up front. In read-throughs with my actors one of the first things I say is, “Hey, if I ever seem like I'm ignoring you, or mishearing you, or something, understand that I have a hearing impairment. Just work with me; I'll work with you.” I've never encountered anyone who was blatantly inconsiderate.

Kari: Have there been barriers for you in your career because of your hearing impairment?

Marianne: The biggest barrier actually came from working on “Open Window”, which is ironic because it's a co-production with Deaf West, THE big Deaf theater. The individuals were lovely and incredibly professional, but I am not Deaf; I don't speak sign language. I'm not completely deaf, I should say. And so what happened for me was, if we were in an environment like a rehearsal room and there was any background noise, it didn't affect the actors, because we had completely deaf actors and completely hearing actors on stage and then on our production team completely hearing designers, director and stage managers. We have a translator, who can speak sign language and hear perfectly. And so what happens--this is kind of the middle ground that the hearing-impaired, versus the completely deaf, find themselves in-- if you don't speak sign language, you are shut out from the deaf world. But you can't hear, so you're shut out from the hearing world. The accommodations that were made in “Open Window” were for the completely deaf actors who spoke sign language, so I missed out on a lot! The translator was speaking for the hearing production team and signing for the Deaf members of the team. There's nothing in that equation for a person who has to lip-read.

Kari: What do you consider your proudest professional accomplishments?

Marianne: Actually, it goes back to “Godot” again. There was a Deaf woman who came to see the show with her interpreter. Our “Godot” was incredibly high paced; we had a young cast, which went against the tradition of casting much, much older, because we felt that the experience of waiting was universal; everybody knows what it is to wait for something, the agony that's in that. And so, this woman comes in with her interpreter,

and the show starts, and the interpreter begins to sign a mile a minute. The way Beckett's language is structured I wasn't sure how she was going to translate it. So, about a minute into this first round of rapid fire back and forth dialogue between Gogo and Didi, I saw the Deaf woman put her hands over her interpreter's hands and shake her head to show that she didn't need the interpreting. She watched the entire rest of the show. She laughed, and she understood what was going on. I was flabbergasted, because somehow, I had directed this show--it must be because I'm hearing-impaired -- and told the story in a visual way. She cried at the end, and it just had such a profound impact on me. I'm proudest of having had that moment with that woman.

Kari Pope is the Coordinator of the Arts and Disability Network for California at the National Arts and Disability Center at UCLA. She is a writer, performer, and editorial board member of *Breath and Shadow*, a Journal of Disability Literature and Culture.

BOOK REVIEW

Bodies in cOmMotion: Disability and Performance

By Carrie Sandahl and Philip Auslander

Reviewed by Janet Salmons

Is disability and performance about **commotion**, disturbing the status quo, or about **co-motion**, moving together? This paradox is at the heart of a new book, "Bodies in cOmMotion", edited by Carrie Sandahl and Philip Auslander (University of Michigan Press). The book explores intersections between disability studies and performance studies through a collection of essays on five themes: 1) Taxonomies: Disability & Deaf Performances in the Process of Self-definition, 2) Disability/Deaf Aesthetics, Audiences & the Public Sphere, and 3) Rehabilitating the Medical Model, 4) Performing Disability in Daily Life, and 5) Reading Disability in Dramatic Literature. The first three sections on performing arts are the focus of this review.

According to Sandahl and Auslander, artists with disabilities are "prompting scholars to investigate how performance studies understand the disabled body and disability as an identify formation, how disability studies understands performance, and how the two fields might make common cause." (p.6) They suggest that to have an interdisciplinary conversation about disability and performance, we need to consider worldviews that differ from the medical model, which sees disabilities as problem conditions needing care and cure. Other worldviews include the minority model, which sees the circumstances of people with disabilities on par with circumstances experienced by other minority populations, with comparable needs equal rights and access. The social construction model looks at disability in the context of a society built for non-disabled people. In this worldview "it is the stairwell in front of the wheelchair user, or written text in front of the blind person that handicaps the individual, not the physical impairment itself." (p.8) The scholars who contributed to this collection of essays investigate issues of identity and culture that emerge when artists with disabilities use the arts to explore and express worldviews rooted in minority and social construction models.

A continuum emerges from these diverse essays to offer viewpoints on the phenomenon of disability in everyday life as performance, to the phenomenon of performance on stage in a formal theater setting by performers with disability. Across this continuum the authors describe a variety of other possibilities. Performers with disabilities participate in performance as therapy, or as community education with non-disabled arts organizers and facilitators. Performers with disabilities use theater or dance to express their own experiences on stage. Performers with disabilities perform roles of people with disabilities in scripted theater productions. And in some cases, disabled performers take roles of characters where the scripted character did not have disabilities. Additional distinctions exist between performances by artists with disabilities for audience members with disabilities and work by artists with disabilities in performances that involve a mix of disabled/non-disabled performers, for mixed audiences.

The essays in this volume transverse this continuum with examples from daily life to stage. The writers discuss and raise critical questions about the identity of performers and audiences, and the exchange that occurs in a performance.

The first section, "Taxonomies: Disability & Deaf Performances in the Process of Self-definition", includes four essays that look at various ways people with disabilities define themselves in relation to audiences. In "Delivering Disability, Willing Speech," Brenda Jo Brueggemann re-thinks the "rhetorical triangle" of the speaker, the audience and the subject in the context of work where sign language interpreters are involved. Rosemarie Garland Thomson's essay, "Dares to Stares: Disabled Women Performance Artists & the Dynamics of Staring," and Jim Ferris's essay, "Aesthetic Distance & the Fiction of Disability," look at the interplay between artist and audience. Thomson suggests that when audiences stare at artists with disability it is "visual probing," an effort on their part to make sense of the disabled body of the performer. She describes various ways that performers create dramatic encounters that invite staring, and then use the performance to manipulate the audience experience. Ferris points out that while distance is a factor in all art, when performers have disabilities the audience may find it hard to distinguish reality from fiction. Are these actors performing a play or people sharing narratives about their own experiences?

In the second section, "Disability/Deaf Aesthetics, Audiences & the Public Sphere", questions about identity of performers and relationships with audiences are placed into a larger context. When performances by artists with disabilities enter the public sphere, "reactions and responses to them are shaped by the dominant discourses already in place." These essays explore complexities of the public sphere, and interrogate issues around critical reception and public understandings of performances by mixed casts for mixed audiences.

The third section of the book, "Rehabilitating the Medical Model", explores several different implications of the medical model worldview. The editors posit that unlike the minority and social construction models that emphasize group cultural identity, the

medical model individualizes people as "victims" or "patients." One theme of this section relates to consequences for individuals of the pervasive, historical adoption of the medical model, and ways these experiences emerge in artistic expression and performance. Another theme of this section is more literally related to the medical model: the artistic work of people with disabilities that is filtered, translated or facilitated by non-disabled arts therapists or coordinators.

While "Bodies in cOmMotion: Disability and Performance" includes many references to companies and to contemporary artists with disabilities, this is not a book that reviews artists or performances. Instead, this collection focuses on personal and public significance of such artists and performances. The editors aimed for a collection that would serve as a conversation across disciplines of disability studies and performance studies, but the potential exists for a much larger conversation about identity, access and inclusion involving disciplines from architecture to psychology and sociology. The book will be useful as a text in academic studies of any of these disciplines, but the clear writing style of the essays and detailed explanations of concepts mean the book's value is not limited to use by scholars.

Janet Salmons consults with arts organizations and educational institutions through Vision2Lead, Inc. (www.vision2lead.com) and is on the MBA faculty of Capella University, where she teaches courses on leadership. She is also a member of the Opening Stages Editorial Board.

NEWS AND NOTES

DANCING WHEELS MARKS 25TH ANNIVERSARY

On October 1 Dancing Wheels marked its 25th anniversary with a gala celebration in Cleveland, Ohio. Mayor Jane Campbell officially designated the day as "Dancing Wheels Day." The company was founded by Mary Verdi-Fletcher, America's--and possibly the world's -- first wheelchair dancer. Born with spina bifida, she revolutionized modern dance with her new concept of Integrated Dance, which combines sit-down (wheelchair) and standing up dancers. Dancing Wheels has performed for millions of people across the world and collaborated with celebrities such as Ben Vereen and Tommy Tune. Following Verdi-Fletcher's innovation, 10 other integrated dance troupes have sprung up across the United States during the past two decades. For more information about Dancing Wheels visit their web site www.dancingwheels.org.

AUSTRALIAN CONFERENCE SEEKS ARTISTS

The Art of Difference is a Creative Conference that will be staged at Gasworks Arts Park in Melbourne, Australia on May 18-20. The Conference aims to create professional development opportunities for people with disabilities in the creative arts. In addition, it seeks to stimulate critical debate, foster professional arts practice amongst artists with disabilities, increase access to quality disability arts outcomes and produce participatory workshops. Its focus will be both national and international.

The Conference is currently seeking artists to exhibit, perform, present and lead workshops. Art of Difference is not disability type specific and is appropriate for people with an intellectual, physical and sensory disability, acquired brain injury, neurological impairment and those with mental or other health issues.

For more information contact:
Simon Abrahams
Festivals & Events Coordinator
Gasworks Arts Park
21 Graham St Albert Park Vic 3206
tel: 03 8606 4202
fax: 03 9699 9890
e-mail: sabrahams@gasworks.org.au
web site: www.gasworks.org.au

LAUNCH OF NEW AUSTRALIAN PUBLICATION ON ARTS AND DISABILITY

On December 1 members of the Australian Parliament launched a new publication called "Making the Journey: arts and disability in Australia". The 96 page full color book is free and available in hardcopy and online from the Australia Council and Arts Access Australia.

"Making the Journey" offers 12 case studies as examples of recent approaches, issues and achievements in the Australian field of art and disability. The book has been made possible by the support of the Australia Council and Family and Community Services.

The case studies in this book show initiatives from the arts, health, education and training sectors and responses by cultural organizations that remove barriers to participation. A theme across all of the examples is the leadership of artists, audience members and advocates with a disability. The examples have been chosen to stimulate discussion and provide inspiration for change.

Arts Access Australia is a national body that brings together a network of arts and disability organizations around Australia. Together they work to increase access to the arts for the one in five Australians with a disability.

One way in which they do this is to assist cultural organizations in meeting the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act of 1992. The Act requires businesses and organizations to make their goods, services and premises accessible for people with a disability. In the process, a diverse range of inclusive arts projects have found support and been encouraged to expand. "Making the Journey" was specifically prompted by a desire to promote success stories and the many developments that have taken place in the lives of people with disabilities in the last 25 years.

The organizations discussed in the book represent just a sample of the projects and people who are “making the journey” to widen perceptions of art and open it to people who have traditionally been excluded from its practice. The case studies have been drawn from both large and small organizations, and cover metropolitan and regional areas in all Australian states and territories.

The studies are divided into three sections. Each section highlights a different aspect of the work being done by these organizations.

Section 1: Opening Doors

The organizations in this section open the door to arts activities in a variety of ways. They have been active in creating accessible venues, encouraging local authorities’ support for integrated arts initiatives, developing arts programs in a community health context and providing training for employment in the arts.

Section 2: Making a Difference

This section looks at some specific initiatives which make a practical and obvious difference to the lives of people with a disability and to the understanding of the general population. These programs bring the artistic skills of people with a disability to public attention, generate income, take creative and practical approaches to participation, and build community and business relationships.

Section 3: Make it New

This section’s case studies offer examples of artwork created by --and for --people with a disability. One of the key elements in these works is the way the worlds of people with a disability stretch traditional understandings of art by creating new and specific forms.

The book contains contacts and resources on all the subject areas covered in the case studies, including local and international disability resources plus information about approaches to disability action plans and legal definitions.

For copies of “Making The Journey’ contact:

Arts Access Australia

phone: +61 2 9251 6844

fax: +61 2 9251 6422

e-mail: ed@artsaccessaustralia.org

web site: www.artsaccessaustralia.org

“STORM READING” NOW AVAILABLE ON DVD

Access Theatre's critically acclaimed play “Storm Reading” is now available on DVD. The play stars Neil Marcus, Matthew Ingersoll and Kathryn Voice and is directed by Rod Lathim. Neil Marcus is a poet, philosopher and actor living with dystonia. “Storm Reading” toured the USA, Europe and Canada between 1889 and 1996. It was taped for television by Smith Hemion Productions and won a Media Access Award in 1998.

Drama-Logue Magazine praised "Storm Reading" as "breathtaking...damn fine theatre!" And Daily Variety called it "...pure theatrical magic."

The DVD features audio description, captioning and sign language interpretation. The show's scenes are each captured as menu items.

Although Access Theatre closed in 1996 after 18 years of creating original, fully accessible theatre, the company's legacy lives on with this new release of its landmark play. The Theatre's history is recounted in a book titled "Storms and Illuminations: 18 Years Of Access Theatre" by Cynthia Wisheart.

The DVD of "Storm Reading" is available for only the cost of shipping and handling to any non-profit or educational organization. To obtain a copy send a check for \$5.00 to Emily Publications at 2428 Chapala Street, Santa Barbara, CA 93105. For more information contact Rod Lathim at 805- 569-1064.

SUPERFEST DISABILITY FILM FESTIVAL CALLS FOR SUBMISSIONS

SUPERFEST, the world's longest-running juried international disability film festival, is seeking submissions to its 26th film competition. SUPERFEST is an international showcase for cutting-edge films that portray disability culture and experience in all its rich diversity. The postmark deadline for submissions is January 31.

The Festival seeks works about disability produced since January 1996. It especially encourages submissions by media makers with disabilities. A 1/2 inch VHS-NTSC preview format or DVD is required, along with a completed and signed entry and release form, and entry fee check. Early bird discounts on fees are available for applications mailed by January 15. Judging takes place in spring 2006, and winners will be announced on or around April 1. Winners will be screened in the San Francisco Bay Area in June 2006, and all entries will be listed in the festival catalogue.

This Festival is funded solely by entry fees and small grants. Entry fees range from \$30 to \$90, depending on film length and production budget. To request an entry packet, send a legal size self addressed, stamped envelope to:

CDT
P.O. Box 1107
Berkeley, CA 94701
Phone: 510-845-5576
Email: Superfest@aol.com.

For detailed information or to download an entry form, visit <http://www.culturedisabilitytalent.org>.

'TRANSFORMATION' – INTERNATIONAL CALL FOR ENTRIES

VSA arts invites artists to reflect on the many ways art transforms our lives, focusing on the influence of education and disability. Open to artists (ages 22 and over) who are committed to their artistic progress and who have a physical, cognitive, or mental disability. Distinguished jury will review two slides of earlier work and three slides of current work within the span of 5 years. Recent work entered must be at the onset of disability. An entry-specific artist statement should be included with slides. No entry fee; round trip shipping expenses covered; selected artwork does not have to be framed. Exhibit will debut in Washington, DC during June of 2006.

For eligible media and entry forms in English, Spanish, French and ASCII:
www.vsarts.org/transformation Braille, large print available upon request.

Deadline to apply: Friday, March, 24, 2005

For questions, please contact:

Stephanie Moore, Director, Visual Arts

VSA arts

818 Connecticut Avenue, NW, Suite 600

Washington, DC 20006

tel +1.202.628.2800

fax +1.202.429-0868

TTY +1.202.737.0645

RGK FOUNDATION – FUNDING

Funding opportunity. Grants are made for up to \$25,000. There is no deadline for submitting an electronic Letter of Inquiry. RGK supports innovative projects, without geographical limitations, in the areas of Education, Community, and Medicine/Health. Grants are made only to nonprofit organizations certified as tax exempt under Sections 501(c)(3) or 170(c) of the Internal Revenue Code and are classified as "not a private foundation" under Section 509(a). For additional information go to:

<http://www.rgkfoundation.org/guidelines.php>

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For more information contact: The Accessibility Program at (202) 416-8727 (voice) or (202) 416-8728 (TTY), or via e-mail at access@kennedy-center.org.

